

THE SITUATION

LETTERS TO M. J. DE F***, AT THE CHATEAU DE B***.

PAIN.

LETTER I

Dear friend,

You remind me WHERE ARE WE GOING? This work, published sixteen years ago, is in your eyes the anticipated history of what we see, and you ask me to say in 1860, what I think about the situation of Europe, as I said in 1844. I leave to your friendship the responsibility of its judgment. As for the desire to know where we are, apart from what is personal to me, who could blame them? They are only too justified by the seriousness of the circumstances.

At certain times of the day, the sun shines brightly. The man can then go about his business and walk without fear of losing his way. But there comes a time when the sun goes below the horizon. Without disappearing entirely, the objects darken and fade. Soon night falls, and no one can work or walk without danger.¹

This alternation of light and darkness takes place in the day we call life: the life of nations as well as individuals. When the sun of faith shines on them, societies walk without fear of going astray. But there come times when error, avoided for a long time, ends up piling up clouds which obscure the horizon. The truth no longer projects, on most minds, only dubious glimmers. The danger of going astray becomes immense. At these dreadful hours a kind of dizziness seems to fall on the world. Heads turn. Words change their meaning. The strongest minds no longer reason, the others are completely unreasonable. In the incessant conflict of contradictory opinions, convictions

¹ Walk while you have light, so that darkness does not overtake you. John XII 35. ~ The night comes when no one can work. Id. IX, 4

waver. The uncertainty of truth generates the uncertainty of law. From there, a host of erroneous judgments and, too often, eternally regrettable actions.

If we are not there, that is where we are going. Night is falling in Europe. I will only give you one proof. A trial, without example or name in history, is brought against the papacy. For ten months, nations, daughters of the Church, have publicly pleaded against their mother. They accuse her of many things and demand that she be stripped. For or against, all of Europe took part in the debates. The cause appears to be understood. At this moment, the sentence is being handed down with cannon fire. Prisoner, fugitive or martyr, the Father of Christians will henceforth eat the bread of alms and will not know where to rest his head. Some say: well judged. The others: it's a fait accompli. Some: it is parricide.

In the presence of these opposing judgments, the right of the Catholic is to ask the priest for the light necessary to illuminate the present and to guide the future: *Sentinel, what about the night?* The duty of the priest is to respond. To accomplish it, as much as it is in me, I am sending you these few pages. They will have achieved their goal, if they contribute in unison to that of the Church, their mother.

First of all, you have to define the situation. What is it, and what are its distinctive characteristics? Freed from the thousand sophisms by which we seek to obscure or distort it; apart from the political accessories, which are only the twists and turns of the drama, the situation was summed up yesterday in three words: "*Reduce the patrimony of Saint-Pierre; make the Pope the resident of Europe; leave him only a shaky throne and a paltry scepter.*"

Today, the Revolution, having become more bold, formulates its project thus: "An Italian empire, with Rome as its capital."²

This is the goal. In vain they used all means to deceive Catholics and Europe. What the Revolution wants today, what it wanted yesterday, what it has always wanted, is neither Milan, nor Florence, nor Palermo, nor Naples, nor Venice: it is Rome. If she takes Tuscany and Lombardy, Sicily and the Romagna, it is to take Rome. This, I

² The time for half-words has passed. Mr. de Cavour has just said in full parliament: "We want the Eternal City to become the capital of Italy. Under what conditions, when and how? We will be able to say it in six months." The outcome explains the comedy.

repeat, is what the Revolution wants from an immutable will. I add: this is what she must have wanted. Before saying the reason, it is necessary to clearly characterize its current war against the metropolis of Catholicism.

However, this war presents characteristics which essentially distinguish it from all others, and which increase its seriousness. In past centuries, we have seen several times when popes were forced to leave Rome and flee into exile. The expeller had a proper name. He was called in turn Henri, Otho, Barbarossa. We knew who to blame. Today, the Pope's expeller has no proper name: he is called LEGION.

Garibaldi, Fanti, Mazzini, Victor-Emmanuel and the others are only his soldiers. Legion is nowhere and he is everywhere. He lives in the air. He speaks all the languages. All the echoes of the world respond to his voice. It is he who puts the papacy on trial; who cites her at the bar of the whole world; who discusses his rights; which transforms what was dogma into a problem, and which makes millions of voices cry out: The Pope is wrong. Legion is the ***Spirit*** which breathes on the world today and which arms it against the Holy See.

In the past, the expulsion of Vicar of Jesus Christ was an act of brutality and temporary violence. Public opinion protested energetically and soon forced the kidnapper to let go of his prey. Today, the same act is a calculated act of cold blood; an act which is part of a general plan and which one claims to pass off as legitimate. We are not expelling the Holy Father, we are proving to him that he must withdraw. On the value of the reasons, opinion is divided: the papacy falls to the applause of half of Europe.

In the past, the spoliation of the heritage of Saint-Pierre did not take away from the Church all of its territorial independence. Landowner in all countries, it continued to be a power to be reckoned with. Today, by confiscating the Roman States, we are taking away from the mother of Christian nations the last independent corner of land that remains.

Formerly, the papacy was for baptized Europe what the holy ark was for the people of Israel. To touch her was not only to hurt her heart, it was to attack God himself in the apple of his eye. Today, the most monstrous attacks against the Holy See leave nations

indifferent. The land of the brave has barely provided a few thousand crusaders to defend the most sacred and glorious of causes!

Where does this change of disposition in the public mind come from? How can we explain the frightening ease with which the Revolution advances towards its goal? What is the meaning of the iniquitous enterprise, the last act of which will probably be completed before the publication of these letters?

Every government relies on two forces: moral force and material force. For a weak state, essentially peaceful and surrounded by powerful states, the first is everything. At home and away from home, general affection, respect, popularity, in a word, must surround him and take the place of armies and citadels. Despite inevitable tribulations, this is how he lived for ten centuries, peaceful and venerated, the royalty of Saint-Peter, in the middle of warlike Europe. Does this powerful popularity, born of the love and faith of the people, protect the blessed royalty of Pius IX today?

Today's Europe is three-quarters heretical, schismatic, rationalist and indifferent: that's a fact.

For a long time modern nations, even Catholic ones, have tended to become secularized, which means freeing themselves as much as they can from religious authority: this is still a fact. "Societies, it is said, are secular. They must be. Such is the spirit of the times, the sign of virility, the condition of progress."

From these two facts results a third: Current Europe no longer includes a Priest-King. She pities her subjects, as one pities the pariahs of India. But it understands and supports very well, like all heretical and schismatic countries, a King-Pontiff. In his eyes, the papal royalty is an outdated debris from the Middle Ages; a shameful legacy of the times of ignorance; a remnant of theocracy incompatible with civilization and an obstacle to the emancipation of the human spirit.

Hence, as an inevitable consequence, the division of opinion on the Roman question. Hence the thousands of sarcasms, spread everywhere, against the Pope's government, against the Pope's political conduct, against the Pope's subjects, against the Pope's soldiers. It is therefore a sad fact that the temporary government of the Vicar of Jesus Christ no longer has as its defense the powerful popularity of the past. There lies the double cause of its instability and the triumphs of the Revolution.

This situation is the storm of Europe which is all the more culpable for it. It will seem much more so to you, if you examine the goal of the division which it pursues with so much obstinacy, or which it allows to be accomplished with so much weakness.

Isolate the Church; gradually push her out of society; weaken its action on the world; bring it back to the state of purely spiritual power, as in the days of the Catacombs; make her dependent on Caesar, (ie, the state; government); hamper her movements and make her enter the most difficult phase of her existence: For those who know how to read, this is the first idea, written in the supreme fact that we think of consuming.

To constitute temporal power, absolute master of the earth through property, of intelligence through doctrine, and of the will through law; thus annihilating the great social fact of Christianity, the hierarchical division of powers: This is the second idea, already realized by all heterodox governments.

In other words, the current fact means: SUBSTITUTION OF THE ABSOLUTE REIGN OF MAN FOR THE REIGN OF GOD.

These are the external characteristics of the situation. In my first letter I will try to tell you the mysterious reason.

All yours, etc.

LETTER II

Dear Friend,

I promised to tell you the reason why the Revolution must want Rome at all costs. The last sentence of my letter has already made you sense this. I will explain myself more clearly.

It would be childish to dispute this: the Church's temporal power is only being attacked in order to gain access to its spiritual power. They rightly flatter themselves that the progressive weakening of the latter will benefit what is called the emancipation of humanity, or, to put it another way, the autocracy of kings and peoples.

Here, facts speak louder than words. Is it to obtain the few leagues of territory of which the Papal State is made up that the Revolution sets in motion all its public and secret forces? Because the successor of the fisherman of Galilee will have an independent corner of land, to moor his boat and rest his head whitened by the years, is the European balance threatened?

How do the Italians themselves not see that they are being fooled, and that their unification project is a utopia? Wanting to unify Italy without the Church is to undertake the solution of an insoluble problem. There are only two things that unite: God in heaven and the Church on earth. To pretend to unite without these two elements of unity is simply to want to achieve the absurd. Instead of unification, the Italians, peoples of different origins and antipathetic races, will achieve division and anarchy, followed by the ruin of their country or brutal despotism. It will be, as in the good old days, unity in slavery and in misery.

Motivating the war against Rome on the freedom and happiness to be procured for papal subjects is a bitter joke. The conduct of those who allow it is the solemn denial of their words.

Why then this persistence in wanting to strip the Pope of his temporality? What unknown force pushes the world not to shy away from any maneuver, however shameful and guilty it may be, to achieve this goal? Whoever wants to give a serious

explanation of this otherwise inexplicable phenomenon must resort to the great mystery of history.

The world is divided into two enemy cities: the City of Good and the City of Evil. Formed from the beginning of the centuries, the city of Satan will develop throughout the duration of ancient paganism. Its center is at Nineveh and Babylon. Queen of the world, Rome finally becomes its capital.³

From there, as from the top of his citadel, the *Prince of the century, leader of this century*, reigns as Sovereign. From there, orders come that make people tremble to the ends of the earth; the armies that ravage them; the proconsuls who despoil and oppress them; the scandals that degrade them; the edicts of proscription which, for three centuries, watered the cities and countryside of the East and the West with Christian blood. Silent with terror before this gigantic power, humanity only knows how to give it its adoration, its gold and its blood.

However, the destinies of the Eternal City are not fulfilled. Depth of God's guidance on this mysterious city! Rome had to become the capital of another empire, no less powerful and more extensive than the first. Another God will have to reign in the Capitol; other armies subdue the people to him; other proconsuls govern his provinces; other laws direct the human race, in whatever climate it inhabits. For a long time the world, enlightened by this new Rome by the sun of truth, by it freed from the irons of slavery, will pay it with enthusiasm a just tribute of recognition and fidelity.

Despite this beneficial revolution, the memory of pagan Rome, of its great material unity, of its lying freedoms and its deceptive splendors, will no more perish in the heart of man than the original virus. Satan will entertain, from generation to generation, the thought of resurrecting his empire. In the eyes of the sons of Eve; he will dazzle the ancient glories of his reign. Through insolent comparisons, he will dare to compare his creations to the creations of Christianity, and, too often, will know how to give preference to the former over the latter.

Its institutions, its arts, its wealth, its so-called great men, its splendid triumphs and above all the fascinating apotheosis of the human will, will become for many a double

³ S. Aug. From Civ. Dei, lib. XV, c.v.

object of admiration and regret. Under one name or another, resurrect this order of things, and, if possible, make Rome the capital of a new anti-Christian empire of which Italy, restored to political unity, will be, as in the past, the proud municipality: Such is, whether we see it or not, the formidable idea hidden at the bottom of what moves before our eyes.

There is ample evidence of this diabolical tendency, which has long been noted by a few, and has now become palpable: two will be enough. On June 28 of this year, the Cardinal Vicar said in his edict on the occasion of the feast of the Prince of the Apostles: "The triumph of Saint Peter over the city of Rome excited such rage in the demon, that he has never ceased to attack the Holy See with the fiercest war, nor to want to bring Rome back to ancient errors and barbarities. Without recalling its efforts in past centuries, have we not been, ourselves. and are we not now witnesses of those whom he is leading against Peter's boat?"

In his Encyclical of December 8, 1849, Pius IX, victim for the first time of the Revolution, is even more explicit. "The Revolution," he said, "is inspired by Satan himself. Its goal is to destroy from top to bottom the edifice of Christianity and to reconstitute on its ruins the social order of paganism. Its great means is to make shine in the eyes of the Italians the glories of pagan Rome, in order to make Christian Rome odious, as being the obstacle which prevents Italy from reconquering the ancient splendor of ancient times, that is to say of pagan times: (quo Italia pristinum veterum temporum, id est Ethnicorum, splendorem iterum acquirere possit.)"

Thus says the greatest authority on earth. This language of the august Pontiff is too remarkable for me to simply report it. I will come back to this in my next letter. Today I limit myself to making a few conclusions.

Bringing the world back to paganism is the last word of the Revolution. In revealing it, the oracle of truth (Pius IX) spoke gold. The great obstacle to the execution of this infernal project, diabolici eorum consilii (their diabolical plans), is in the eyes of the Revolution, the temporal power of the Holy See. She's not wrong.

The Pope-King is the visible kingship of Jesus Christ over the world, it is the independence of the Church and of the truth. The Church being today everywhere stripped of the sovereign right of property, this visible royalty disappears with the loss of

the Roman State. Unable to go any further, this is what the Revolution wants. This is why the domain of Saint Peter is so eagerly coveted; why Rome once again becomes the issue of combat; why, finally, we see what the world has never seen: the Vicar of Jesus Christ threatened in his very capital, by a hundred thousand excommunicated people, to the great applause of all the citizens of the City of Evil, spread all over the world.

Rome taken, Satan once again becomes the prince of this world. For what? because the last social obstacle to his power and the authority of his lieutenants has disappeared. Create, as before, a world where Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, will be as if he were not; a world where human power, without control, will have the Church and all spiritual interests under its control; this is its goal. With the Pope-King, this goal is unachievable. You will understand it.

Representative of God himself among men, the Pope is the depositary and incorruptible interpreter of the eternal law of justice and freedom; the bronze wall impassable to all despotisms; the immutable pontiff who alone can say with sovereign authority to oppressive kings, as well as to rebellious peoples: *NON LICET*, this is not permitted; who, at the risk of his life, is obliged to say it, and who has said it faithfully from generation to generation, for eighteen centuries.

Now, the Pope-King is the materially independent Pope: he is the inviolable Pope. The inviolable Pope is the Pope free to tell the whole truth and to hurl anathema against the despoilers and despots, whatever their height.

The Revolution, which, under the mask of freedom and equality, is nothing but spoliation and living despotism, cannot support papal royalty. Her existence is for her a question of life and death. She feels wonderfully that there is a force there, the only one which opposes another force whose triumph she enjoys today and the apotheosis tomorrow. It therefore directs all its attacks against this force of the Pontiff-King, because it alone prevents, as it will always prevent, the modern Caesars from engraving on their diadem the stupefying motto of their predecessors of old; Emperor and sovereign Pontiff, (*Imperator and summus Pontifex*).

Let the so-called worshipers of freedom take it for granted. Their attacks against the papal royalty lead them, and us with them, to the most threatening despotism that has

yet weighed on the world. When the Pope is no longer king, kings will be popes. All the freedom reserved for the peoples, who will have crucified it, in the person of its representative, will be to repeat, under the mortal embraces of slavery, the funeral words of the gladiators: "Caesar, those who are about to die salute you: *Cæsar, morituri te salutant.*"

If we want to fully understand the situation, this, my dear friend, is what we need to see: the rest, as you say, is for the short-sighted.

All yours.